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Commonwealth Transportation Board Selects Alternative 1 for Richmond/Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Project

Richmond, Va., February 17, 2010 – Today the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) selected Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative for the Richmond/Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Project. The decision was based on the results of a Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) completed by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), in addition to the public comments received.

During the public comment period from December 23, 2009, to February 11, 2010, DRPT held three public hearings in Richmond, Newport News and Norfolk to gain public feedback on the best option for enhanced passenger rail service between Richmond and Hampton Roads. Fifty-eight percent of the public comments received were in support of Alternative 1.

Alternative 1 will bring enhanced passenger rail service to the Hampton Roads region with three conventional speed (79 mph) trains along the Peninsula/CSXT route in the I-64 corridor and six higher speed (90 mph) trains along the Southside/NS route in the Route 460 corridor. Stations on the Peninsula route include the existing Richmond Main St. Station, Williamsburg, and Newport News stations. Stations on the Southside route include the existing Richmond Main St. and Petersburg stations, and new stations in Bowers Hill and Downtown Norfolk. Today, there are two conventional speed trains on the Peninsula route and no trains on the Southside route.

Preliminary cost estimates include \$475.4 million in capital improvements and \$80 million in annual operating costs, with annual ridership projected at up to 1,110,100 passengers. The estimated travel time between Richmond and Newport News is approximately one hour and 11 minutes, and the travel time between Richmond and Norfolk is estimated at one hour and 35 minutes.

DRPT will apply for federal funding to advance the selected alternative. In addition, DRPT will complete the Tier I Final EIS document in order to achieve a federal Record of Decision later this year. The FRA Record of Decision will determine the next steps in the federal review process. Federal funding and annual operating funds are critical components of the project's financial plan. Virginia currently has no dedicated source of operating funds for intercity passenger rail service.

For more information on the Richmond/Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Project visit www.rich2hrrail.info.

About DRPT

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is the state agency for rail, public

transportation and commuter services in Virginia. DRPT has three business areas: rail, transit, and congestion management that help improve the mobility of people and goods while providing more transportation choices. Visit us at www.drpt.virginia.gov.